

**A PASTORAL COUNSELING PROGRAM FOR
MEXICAN-IMMIGRANT FAMILIES**

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the Faculty of the
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**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry**

**by
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Abstract

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Brindice Munoz-Rivera

Mexican immigrants have different values than the Anglos. When they come to the United States, they bring their culture, which is very rich, and experience many conflicts because of the different culture in which they are living. The author of this project read several books and did research among the Mexican-immigrant families in Long Beach, California to determine if their values were changed, what kinds of conflicts they were dealing with, and their suggestions on how to deal with them. After examining the results, a pastoral counseling program was developed to help families deal better with their conflicts and adjust to this culture.

More than thirty questionnaires were prepared and distributed among the Mexican immigrants, the majority of them undocumented and from different areas of the city. Of the questionnaires distributed, twenty were collected from youth, men and women. Some of the values considered important for them were personalism, familism, spiritual concerns (justice, love, and loyalty), parental approval for courtship and marriage, support of grandparents, discipline of children, and fatalism. According to the results, the majority of the traditional values have been maintained, although the Anglo culture is influencing the immigrants, especially the youth. Among the conflicts that the immigrant considered very important were: young people and drugs, lack of health insurance, lack of employment, the

discipline of young people, youth and gangs, and high crime.

Because of these conflicts and differences in values from white middle-class Americans, a pastoral counseling program to the Mexican immigrants should use different types of counseling in order to be effective. The author proposes a type of counseling that gives more direct advice, help, and support to the poor regarding their needs. These persons seek help which is related to their material needs. The author and volunteers from the church will give help or refer these persons to other agencies. After they develop trust, other counseling techniques can be used to help them, such as pluralistic counseling, group counseling, family therapy, and assertiveness training.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The author of this project, who is Hispanic, but not Mexican, will examine the Mexican-immigrant families in Southern California, especially in the Long Beach area, and will establish a pastoral counseling program for them. In order to accomplish this, research was done using the method of life study data from resource books about the culture group, personal interviews with Mexican pastors working with immigrant families, and questionnaires distributed to Mexican-immigrant persons in the congregation and the neighborhood. Select questions from the questionnaire were also asked of Mexican pastors.

The purpose of the research was to learn the characteristics of the Mexican-immigrant families, their way of life, and their diversity and conformity to the Anglo culture. It is important to know the characteristics of individuals in this culture group which make them distinct. The study will also explore types and priorities of problems they face, and resources to help them.

Culture groups are defined as a group of persons or a community that shares common interests, beliefs and cultural values. Pauline V. Young, author of the book Scientific Social Surveys and Research, defines a culture group as "a union of persons who have a common material and social heritage, common beliefs, habits, activities and interests and who live in the

same social environment."¹

For example, the Mexican-Americans who live in Arizona, who are called Chicanos, share all these characteristics and are therefore, a culture group. Another culture group is the Mexican immigrants in Southern California. The first group consists mainly of persons of Mexican descent who were born in the United States and are fluent in English, but who keep the cultural values and customs of their ancestors. Some Mexican-Americans have adapted to the language and culture of this country, but others, like the Chicano, are more like a political group that fights for its rights and the preservation of its own culture. The second group, Mexican immigrants in California, share common interests and values and are struggling to improve their living conditions, but they are generally less adapted to Anglo culture and less politically organized.

Every culture has its own traditions, laws, patterns and forms of social control to which the members are required to conform. In the research done among the Mexican-immigrant families, the author learned that some of the cultural patterns and values were kept by the families, although they have been living here for several years and have adapted to this culture in order to survive. Family values are very strong for them, and they tend to maintain the values they received from their parents, although some of these values have been influenced by this culture.

1. Pauline V. Young, Scientific Social Surveys and Research (Inglewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1966), 493.

The author was interested in the changes that the Mexican-immigrant families have experienced after being exposed to a different culture for several years, including which of their own cultural values were kept or changed. By means of a questionnaire, he studied the different conflicts that this cultural group had experienced in the United States.

One of the studies that helped the author understand the values and conflicts of that culture group was a class at the School of Theology at Claremont with Allen J. Moore, Professor of Religion and Personality and Christian Education, entitled "Family Patterns and Social Change." The author also did a study with Dan D. Rhoades, Professor of Christian Ethics at Claremont, about the research methods that helped to prepare for this research and project.

One of the methods used for the research was, as mentioned earlier, the questionnaire. This is a method of collecting information that can be used with big and small groups. The method used by the author helped to discover the changes in values and best alternatives to solve the different conflicts. The questionnaire and introductory letter are included in Appendix A. In the introductory letter, which has been translated into English in this project, the following information is included: identification of the person collecting the data, the date, the purpose of the study, and the title of the project. With this information the person knew what kind of survey it was. The person was not asked to write his or her name on the questionnaire to protect the confidentiality of the data.

Most of the persons who answered the questionnaire were undocumented and were in some way afraid of being discovered.

Young mentions that there are different types of responses to questions asked in questionnaires.

One is a dichotomous question. This one elicits a response like "yes" or "no." The problem with this response is that the researcher cannot get enough information. Another type of response is the multiple choice. These are very effective if the choices are few and easy to follow.²

In Appendix B, Table 4, the author asked the persons to select the best alternatives to solve the problem of dual languages. They were asked to rate them in importance from one to five. Another important response used in the questionnaire was the checklist. (See A.N. Oppenheim for further information.)³ These are like probes to remind the responder of certain items. One example of the checklist is in Appendix B, Table 6, which asks about the role of man and woman.

Because some persons tend to forget about questionnaires sent by mail and do not return them, the author decided to take the questionnaire to the persons himself and return later to pick them up. The author distributed more than thirty questionnaires among different Mexican-immigrant families and collected twenty of them. Of those collected, ten were from women, six from men, and four from youth. The research also explored a way of dealing with the dual-culture conflict, and asked for suggestions from

2 Young, 190.

3 A.N. Oppenheim, Questionnaire Design and Attitude Measurement, Revised ed., ed. Seymour Martin Lipset (New York: Basic Books, 1966), 81-102.

Mexican immigrants for the solutions of those problems.

Another useful tool in this project was the interview. The author interviewed two Mexican pastors who came from the same background as the cultural group that was studied, and who also had experience working with Mexican families in their own country, as well as Mexican-immigrant families. The purpose of the interviews was to get the two pastors' opinions about the dependability of the survey results and to obtain information about those areas under study.

Young considers the interview to be an effective verbal and non-verbal communication that has specialized purposes.⁴ (See also Earl R. Bobbie about the interview and other methods.)⁵ The interview is very effective because the researcher can get information from a person who is expert in a field, or has special knowledge in the area of investigation. Young calls the type of interview the author used with the Mexican pastors a "focused" interview.⁶ This type is very useful with persons who are related to specific situations. Also, the interview related to data that had been studied beforehand.

Although the interviews were done by telephone, both pastors responded fully and gave suggestions on how the author and the church could work with the immigrants. Instead of asking the pastors all the questions on the questionnaire, the author asked

4 Young, 215.

5 Earl R. Babbie, Survey Research Methods (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1973), 23-39, 41-52.

6 Young, 217-218.

them what they thought were the most important conflicts for Mexican immigrants, and which cultural values they considered most important. For example, one question asked of them was, "In my survey of the Mexican-immigrant families, crime scored very high in concern in these families. What is your opinion about this conflict and how can we help?" In another chapter, the author will present the responses to this and other questions.

Since the majority of the Mexican immigrants here are poor and living in difficult conditions, they need the help of a pastoral ministry that gives direct aid in servicing their needs with problems at school, at the Department of Motor Vehicles with regard to transportation, with police about tickets, and with various governmental agencies. Pastoral counseling is more about the problems related to this new and strange urban and cultural environment, and less about the internal feelings and dynamics of the persons. Because of those dynamics, the author spent more time giving direct advice and help than in church administration and a type of middle-class, pastoral counseling.

This pastoral counseling program will help the Mexican-immigrant families in the church and the community to deal better with their problems. Through a pastoral program related to their own culture, they can deal with the changes in family lifestyles, and the culture conflicts they have experienced in this country.

CHAPTER 2

Intercultural Conflicts and Dynamics

Mexican immigrants have a rich legacy of values and traditions. In the process of adapting to Anglo culture they experience many conflicts because of the different values this culture emphasizes. According to the survey, immigrants view the conflicts in this order of priority:¹

1. Youth and drugs
2. Lack of health insurance
3. Lack of employment
4. Youth and gangs
5. High crime
6. Ethnic prejudice
7. Problems communicating in English
8. Problems because they speak and write in Spanish
9. Low income
10. High cost credit
11. Lack of political representation
12. Changes in the role of husband and wife
13. Their parents or relatives living with them

In terms of ministry, the author already knew which conflicts were more important for the members of his church. One of the conflicts that the church has given much attention to is teaching English in order to help persons to learn the language and be able to get better jobs. Our local church supports a Laubach tutoring program to assist in this area. According to

¹ Appendix B, Table 1, "Some Conflicts Mexican Immigrants Have in USA, in Order of Priority." Research by the author among Mexican-immigrant families in the Long Beach, California area.

the research results, the lack of health insurance is a higher concern than the language problem, and the church has not done anything to help in that area. Drugs, gangs, and high crime are other important concerns. In previous years, this church has developed a program to work with the gangs and high crime.

Unfortunately, the church has been losing Anglo members because of the changing neighborhood. That loss has reduced the financial support for the special programs. Spanish-speaking persons have been coming as members but the Anglos are not committed to the ministry in those areas that are very important to the Mexican immigrants. The author is planning to bring out these priorities to the Administrative Council in order to develop proposals and programs to work with these conflicts.

High Crime

According to the survey, high crime was considered very important by 90 percent of the women, 83 percent of the men and 50 percent of the youth. One reason women are more concerned about crime than men or youth may be that they feel weak and concerned about their children and family.

In order to understand the Mexican immigrants' concern about crime, the author interviewed two Mexican pastors: Rev. David Tinoco, pastor of El Segundo United Methodist Church, who is working on his doctoral dissertation at Fuller Theological Seminary and has worked for many years with Mexican people; and Rev. Ladislao Flores, pastor of La Trinidad United Methodist

Church, who is also working on his doctor's degree at the School of Theology at Claremont. These Mexican pastors helped the author to understand the problems of Mexican families much more clearly. Rev. Tinoco gave his opinion about high crime.

Part of the problem is the revenge of the Mexican and the foreigner when they see themselves surrounded by the minority elements like living in a house with two or three families. The owner of the house does not care how many people live there. The Mexican feels like a victim, minority, oppressed and that is why he reacts to defend himself. Sometimes we make of the sanctuary our fortress and castle and those persons do not feel at home. The church is negative for them. We must learn the language of those people. They see the church as negative because the pastor symbolizes the religion, the sanctity, the food, life. They see the church the same way: representing religion and holiness. The church should go back to the house church, that is to celebrate meetings at the homes of the people.²

The author agrees with Rev. Tinoco that the Mexicans feel oppressed and victimized, and some react with violence against their persecutors. Terry Hoy, citing Oscar Lewis, says "the tendency of Mexican workers to violence and machismo can be attributed to the culture of poverty."³ In Long Beach, high crime is committed by several ethnic groups, not just Mexicans. For example, the author's church was vandalized by a group of blacks. They were seen breaking into the church and attacking teachers. In Long Beach there are many gangs: Samoans,

2. David Tinoco, telephone interview with author, 3 Jan. 1986.

3. Terry Hoy, "Octavio Paz: The Search for Mexican Identity," Review of Politics 64, no. 3 (July 1982): 384.

Mexicans, Puerto-Ricans, blacks, etc. The problem is not limited to Mexicans, but Tinoco is right in terms of the root of crimes committed by Mexicans.

Economic Problem

The author also agrees with Rev. Tinoco that for some the church is negative. For others the church is a place for getting help: food, friendship, even money. That is why half of the men and women said in Appendix B, Table 5, that they could see how the minister and the church could help with the economic problem. Since the local church has given loans to members in previous years, they believe that the church can help them economically.

Rev. Flores added,

This problem is also related with the drugs. Because these families do not have much education, the same Mexicans exploit and abuse them. Since they are here illegally, they cannot go to the authorities to tell their problems. The government says that they are a burden, but they are working and solving many problems. The best way that the church can help is to find resources in the Police Department.⁴

How can the church help? The church can bring resource speakers from police departments to inform persons in what ways they can prevent burglaries and crime. Atlantic Methodist Church in Long Beach, California has already taken some preventive measures in the church by installing iron bars and mesh over the windows to prevent further vandalism and burglaries. One thing

4 Ladislao Flores. telephone interview with author, 3 Jan. 1986.

the church can do is to organize a neighborhood watch program in the area and give orientation to the community by bringing speakers from the police department.

Youth and Drugs

The problem of young people and drugs was one of the highest scored in Appendix B, Table 1. One-hundred percent of the women considered it very important. Sixty-seven percent of the men and seventy-five percent of the youth also considered it very important. It is significant that 75 percent of the youth thought it was a very important conflict. This is the highest response of the youth in the whole table. It means that they are very concerned about the problem. Regarding youth and drugs, Rev. Tinoco said,

For the Mexican, drugs are valves to express their internal feelings. Alcohol is an inducement. They find in drugs a means of getting away from reality. In a camp that I went to, there were youth that were former drug addicts. I learned that if a youth who was in drugs spoke to them, they received the message better than a pastor could give them because he spoke their language and had lived under drugs. I think that the church should find those young men who have been converted and use them as resources along with the institutions that already are helping the youth in drugs."

Rev. Flores added:

Seminars and workshops about drugs would help. Many times the problem is ignorance and other times it's that they do not have anything else to do. The problem is that most of them come from lower classes in Mexico and have little chance for

employment or education here.⁶

Pastors do not have the same influence on these young addicts as a converted drug addict. A former drug addict can speak better and get their attention because he has been on drugs before. Former addicts are good resources because they want others off drugs. Also, as Rev. Tinoco mentioned, the church can work with institutions already involved in rehabilitation programs for addicts. Another good idea is to work on prevention. The church could invite the community for a presentation by a speaker, or maybe a movie, about the problem of drugs.

Lack of Health Insurance

Another problem that the Mexican families considered very important was the lack of health insurance. On the questionnaire, 100 percent of the men responded that the lack of health insurance was a very important problem. That was the highest percentage response in the conflicts by the men. Women supported that view by 90 percent. Men may rank this problem higher because Mexican men are expected to be the breadwinner. They feel responsible for providing health care, and because they cannot get good insurance they are more concerned about it. Fifty percent of the youth also considered the lack of health insurance very important. Rev. Tinoco said that the majority of the Mexicans cannot get health insurance because they work at odd

6 Flores.

jobs, and these jobs do not offer insurance. He added that the biggest problem for them is that they do not have car insurance.⁷ Rev. Flores said that 99 percent do not have health insurance because they are not legal in the country.⁸

The only thing the church can do is help them to get their citizenship, get better jobs and learn the English language. If they learn English they can get a better paying job. Atlantic Methodist Church is related with another Methodist church which is working with orientation to apply for citizenship. When immigrants get their citizenship and a better job, they can get health insurance.

Youth and Gangs

Another problem that immigrants considered very important was young people and gangs. In the author's research, 100 percent of the women considered this problem very important, as did 67 percent of the men, and 50 percent of the youth. Women were more concerned mainly because they spend more time at home relating with their children, and they know if the youth are going with gang members.

Since there are many gangs in Long Beach, some of the youth have been victims of gang attacks, especially Mexican boys attacked by black gangs. This is one of the problems the author had to deal with in the present congregation.

7 Tinoco.

8 Flores.

One thing the church has explored is to organize youth groups, to help them develop a sense of belonging to a group. There are two adults that are receiving training to organize and lead youth clubs. Three months ago the author invited a youth ministry leader of "Way Out Ministries" to give a conference at the church about the youth clubs. That conference promoted the interest of the youth and some leaders to organize youth groups to deal with the problems of gangs.

Rev. Tinoco said that when he was in Los Angeles, he had some families in his church whose children were in gangs.

Youth have a time in which they want to explore everything. We need missionaries in our church that can sacrifice themselves to work with the gangs. For the pastor, because of his family, it's very difficult to involve himself in this area.⁹

Rev. Flores added:

The gang is related with the acceptance of the youth. Youth wanted to be accepted and they join the gang for that reason. The church should offer them an alternative like the use of the gym, special classes, music, etc. The Spanish American Institute has good programs for them.¹⁰

In the author's church there was a former gang leader who was working with the church and trying to help with the gang problems. That was some time ago, and some members told the author that some English-speaking members did not like gangs coming to church. Some left the church, and now there is no

9 Tinoco.

10 Flores.

program for gangs and a very small congregation.

Dual-Language Conflict

Language is one of the conflicts the Mexican immigrant has to deal with, because the majority do not speak English and have to take low paying jobs. Joel Garreau, Washington Post editor, affirms that the undocumented do not speak English, and many are illiterate in Spanish.¹¹ They have problems understanding this country's language, so they experience difficulty finding good jobs. The majority have skills for better paying jobs but cannot speak English well enough.

In the research that the author did among the Mexican-immigrant families in Long Beach, 67 percent of the men considered the problems of communicating and understanding English very important, 90 percent of the women considered it very important, and 25 percent of the youth.¹² It is significant that 90 percent of the women regarded this problem so important. Such a high percentage of women having problems with English may be attributed to the fact that they are adults, and it is more difficult to them to learn English than the youth. Most of them have to work outside the home in addition to doing their housework, and they do not have the time that youth have at school. Some of the women at the church are taking English as a

11. Joel Garreau, The Nine Nations of North America (New York: Avon, 1982), 230.

12. Appendix B, Table 1.

second language because they know they need to learn to get a better paying job.

At the same time, 83 percent of the men and 80 percent of the women thought that it was very important to speak and write in Spanish. None of the youth considered it very important. That may be because at school they only use English. For the adults, the problem of dual languages is very important. How do they suggest dealing with that conflict?

According to the results shown in Appendix B, Table 4, the majority of the Mexicans prefer to speak both languages well to solve the conflict of dual languages. The second option is to speak Spanish at home and English outside. The third one is to speak only English and keep their cultural values. Apparently, the majority of the people recognize the need to learn the main language of this culture in order to improve their living conditions.

The children also experience a dual-language conflict when they want to continue speaking English at home, as they do at school. Many parents want their children to speak Spanish at home, so it is a conflict for the children to speak two languages. The parents could ask their children to teach them English while they are teaching their children Spanish, so that both are helping each other.

Low Income

Another conflict the Mexicans experience is lack of money

because of very low incomes. The median income for non-Hispanics in 1979 was \$17,912 and only \$12,835 for the Mexican-American families.¹³ In other words, Mexican-Americans were below the median by \$5,077. In the research done, 70 percent of the women, 67 percent of the men, and 50 percent of the youth affirmed that low income was a very important problem. That was not a very high percentage, but in Appendix B, Table 1, 20 percent of the women and 17 percent of the men also considered it important. By adding both percentages the importance of that conflict is much higher than "very important." Many persons suffer stress because their salary is not enough to live decently.

Nathan Murillo, author of the article, "The Mexican-American Family," said that one-half of the Mexican-Americans in the southwest live below the official level of poverty.¹⁴ That is also the situation with Mexican immigrants, and it is worse with the immigrants who are struggling with the language. This problem is closely related to the language problem, because if people do not know enough English, they cannot get good jobs. Most Mexican immigrants end up working in agriculture or in industries for a very low salary.

The author presented the Mexican immigrants with eight

13 Harry P. Pachon and Joan W. Moore, "Mexican-Americans," Annals of the Academy of Political and Social Science 454 (March 1981): 118.

14 Nathan Murillo, "The Mexican-American Family," Chicanos: Social and Psychological Perspectives, eds. Carol Hernandez, et al., 2nd ed. (St. Louis: Mosby, 1976), 15.

alternatives to solve the problem of low income.¹⁵ The alternative, "The husband should work in a better paying job," was considered very important by 25 percent of the youth, 67 percent of the men, and 80 percent of the women. The cultural importance of this alternative is that Mexican women still consider men the breadwinners and responsible for solving the problem of low income.

Another alternative considered very important was the husband should get a better education to earn more money. To this one, 25 percent of the youth, 50 percent of the men, and 80 percent of the women answered that it was very important. The difference between the men's response in the previous alternative and this one means that men are not very eager to get a better education to earn more money.

An alternative that received a high percentage was that immigrants should get citizenship. This one was supported by 25 percent of the youth, 50 percent of the men, and 60 percent of the women. This is one of the main concerns of the undocumented immigrants, because unless they get work permits and are citizens, they cannot get better paying jobs.

To deal with that problem, the author participated in a workshop at Wilshire United Methodist Church about helping Mexican immigrants with their legalization process. After this

15 Appendix B, Table 5, "Alternatives to Solving the Problem of Lack of Money.

workshop, the author presented the information to the local church and found some church volunteers to help the undocumented persons with the legalization process. The volunteer proposal was taken to the Administrative Council for approval. The volunteers received information about the new immigration law and the legalization process. The author has given information, referral and help to several Mexican immigrants with their legalization process. Now this ministry is part of El Buen Samaritano center which is explained in detail in the last chapter.

Fifty percent of the men and women considered it important that the minister and church help with the economic problem. The alternative of getting a padrino to help them was supported by the same proportion of men and women. In the Mexican culture, as well as in other Latin American countries, padrino is a person who serves as a godfather or witness at the baptism of a child. Parents and padrinos have a very special relation of friendship and family ties. Padrino also refers to a person in a higher social position who may serve as an advocate or help a person in need. In Latin countries a person who has problems tries to find a padrino to help one find a job, get a loan or a raise in salary. Rev. Flores made the following comment:

In Mexico, people look for a high class padrino that can help them. Here, they no longer need the padrino as in Mexico. The same padrino does not feel the same responsibility.¹⁶

Immigrants do not look to the padrino as they do in Mexico, but to the church or other agencies that perform the functions of the padrino. In this country, Anglo individualism changes the structure the Mexicans had in Mexico. That is the reason they look to the church for help instead of a padrino. Sometimes the minister of the church or a community worker takes the place of the padrino, especially for poor Mexican immigrants. Many needy persons look to the church as a place for help, including financial problems. This is the key reason why the immigrants say that the minister and the church can help with the economic problem.

Another alternative that was supported by 50 percent of the women was getting information from a job agency. Only 33 percent of the men said that it was very important for them. The majority of the men in this community are working. Some are concerned about their citizenship papers and may fear going to a job agency. They prefer to try to get a better job themselves. Many women in that community are working in low paying jobs, especially as housekeepers. It is natural for them to want to get better paying jobs to improve their living conditions. The church must serve as a padrino for these persons to advocate their needs and help them deal with the Anglo bureaucracy.

Extended Family Households

Another conflict Mexican immigrants have is the extended family household, which is very common in poor, Mexican urban

areas. Relatives live together. For example, a married couple may move in with the groom's parents or with the bride's mother. A member of the author's church, who is undocumented, received her sister and children into her small apartment, and she already had five children. Doubling up in a household creates a lot of tension.

Some families live in apartments because they cannot afford a house. There is a lack of moderately priced rentals, and many apartments and houses are not in very good condition and have high rents.

In the research done by the author, 50 percent of the men, 30 percent of the women, and 25 percent of the youth answered that the extended family household was a very important conflict for them, though that was not the highest priority marked by men and women.¹⁷ There is an interesting response shown in Appendix B, Table 7. In that table, the following statement was made: "We should maintain and support our grandparents, and if necessary keep them at home." Ninety percent of the women rated this as very important, while 50 percent of the men and youth did so. This means that the extended family household is a very strong value, especially among the women, even though it is recognized as a conflict. As was mentioned earlier, Mexicans are very interested in people, and they prefer personal help and sharing with people in need within the family, no matter what financial

17 Appendix B, Table 1.

problems they may have.

Male and Female Roles Changes

Male and female roles in society is another conflict that Mexicans experience. In the Hispanic culture, which Mexicans share, there exists a double standard for males and females. The male is expected to have premarital sexual relations or to have experience before marriage. If he does not, he is looked on with suspicion. People may say, "He is not a straight man." Girls are expected to remain virgins until marriage. Youth who are raised in the U.S. have a conflict between what their parents teach them about the double standard and what they learn from this culture.

In Appendix B, Table 6, 75 percent of the youth, 67 percent of the men, and 70 percent of the women considered it very important that the daughter should remain a virgin until marriage. In that same table, 25 percent of the youth, and 10 percent of the women said it was very important that the son have sexual relations before marriage, but 80 percent of the women and 67 percent of the men said it was not important. Therefore, for the men and women it was not important that the son have sexual relations, although it was very important for them that the daughter remain a virgin until marriage. Regarding premarital sex, men, women and youth are clearly unified in considering it very important that the daughter remain a virgin until marriage, but they are not very concerned with the son having premarital

sexual relations. Thus, the view of the daughter's role has not changed.

In the Mexican culture, the father is the autocratic head of the household. He is the breadwinner, and the woman takes care of the home and the children. Regarding the statement, "Man should be the head of household," Appendix B, Table 6 show that 83 percent of the men, 50 percent of the women and 25 percent of the youth considered that role very important. In the Mexican culture, boys and girls are taught different types of behavior. Boys are taught the masculine role and girls the feminine role. Children have a great conflict of values between what they learn from their parents and what they see and hear on television and at school.

While the majority of the men and women agreed that the man should be the head of the household, 83 percent of the men and 80 percent of the women agreed that it was not important that the woman should be subject to the husband. This attitude is a change in the Mexican immigrant's idea of the woman's role as compared with the traditional role in Mexico.

Another role that Mexican immigrants consider very important is that the man should be the breadwinner. This role was considered very important by 67 percent of the men, and 50 percent of the women. Fifty percent of the youth considered it important. This response of the youth is significant because they did not answer some of the questions, if they were not

interested. This response means that Mexican immigrants still consider the man's role as breadwinner very important.

Fifty percent of the youth considered it important that the wife should work outside the home. It is interesting that only 30 percent of the women considered it very important. This role was regarded as not important by 40 percent of the women and 67 percent of the men. In other words, the idea that the wife should work outside the home was not considered very important or important by the majority of the immigrants, except the youth. One reason for this response from the youth is that they recognize the need of the woman to work outside the home to supplement the father's income, to help the family with the financial problems. Another argument that can be presented for the lack of support for women working outside the home among women and men is the concern about the young people, drugs, and gangs. They showed a high concern for those conflicts, and if the woman works outside the home the youth will not have parental oversight.

Mexican immigrants also considered it very important that they should adapt to this country's values. Fifty percent of the youth and men and 20 percent of the women in the survey considered it to be very important. If we add the 33 percent of the men and 10 percent of the women who regarded that role as important, there is a significant support among the Mexican immigrants for the concept of adapting to this culture's values.

One response that was also interesting for the author was the role changes with regard to the question of whether the man may have extramarital sex. Eighty-three percent of the men considered it not important, and 70 percent of the women agreed. The author was expecting the men to respond in high percentages under the categories, "very important" or "important," since in Mexico it is accepted as normal for a man to have extramarital sex because of the macho attitude. The Mexican immigrants either regarded this as not important for them, or they do not regard it as important as other roles. Also, women having extramarital sex was considered not important by 80 percent of the women and 50 percent of the men.

The youth considered it very important that boys should wash dishes, fix dinner and help around the house. This was regarded as very important by 50 percent of the youth, 17 percent of the men and 60 percent of the women. It was regarded as not important by 33 percent of the men and 30 percent of the women. This shows that the youth are adapting to the Anglo culture and are willing to help in the house, a role that is not accepted in Mexico. People consider this a role for the girls, not the boys.

In Mexico, persons of low income live together instead of getting married. That may be a reason why 50 percent of the men and women regarded living together before marriage as not important. This role, and the previous one had only 60 percent of the total answers. In other words, 20 percent

fewer persons answered these questions.

CHAPTER 3

Cultural Value Differences Between Mexicans and Anglos

Nathan Murillo, author of the article "The Mexican American People," mentions certain cultural differences between the Mexican-American and the Anglo.¹ These differences also apply to the Mexican immigrants, because both share the same cultural background. According to Murillo, these differences are mainly in terms of mental "orientations in behavior."² In other words, the Mexicans have some cultural orientation behaviors that make them behave differently from the Anglos. Antonio Stevens Arroyo and Virgilio Elizondo present some contrasting values between North Americans and Latins that characterize both cultures.³ Those values help us to understand better the following differences.

Attitude Toward Material Things

The first difference that Murillo mentions is the "attitude toward material things."⁴ Mexicans tend to look at things as

1 Murillo, 17.

2 Murillo, 17.

3 Antonio M. Stevens-Arroyo and Virgilio P. Elizondo, "Spanish-Speaking in the United States," Liberty and Justice for All: A Discussion Guide (Washington, D.C.: NCCB Committee for the Bicentennial, 1975), 37-41; reprinted in Virgilio P. Elizondo, et al., eds., Prophets Denied Honor (New York: Maryknoll, 1980), 7-13.

4 Murillo, 17.

necessary for survival or useful, but not as a value or end.

Work, for example, is necessary to obtain money to support the family, but is not a value in itself. Mexicans give more merit to "emotional experiences and intellectual awareness" than to gathering a fortune.⁵ For example, in the Mexican community, persons give much importance to the celebration of important events in the family, like a party for a daughter who is celebrating her fifteenth birthday. The family spends a lot of money to prepare the party, rent a place for it, and provide food to please friends and guests. The family experiences great emotional satisfaction doing that, no matter how much money they spend on the party. Anglos usually do not understand how a "poor family" spends so much on a party because they have a different perspective. For the Mexican family, the spiritual satisfaction is more important than the money they spend. That satisfaction is similar to the one Anglos or Asians experience when they buy an expensive new car.

For instance, the Atlantic United Methodist Church in Long Beach used to rent the main hall to community families for parties, and the families often spent \$450 on the rental of the hall alone. In addition to that, they pay for musicians, food, clothes for the birthday girl, etc.

In Los Angeles, many undocumented Mexicans open their houses or apartments to other persons or families. They share their

house and food, although they may be living on a very low income. For them, it is more important to share what they have than to save money or get material things. Sometimes this sharing of their housing does not let them progress financially. Another example is that some Mexicans prefer to be closer to their family or parents than to accept a promotion. That prevents them from getting a promotion and more money because of the importance they place on the family and the satisfaction they experience in helping persons. By sharing with others, they achieve social status and recognition. Murillo presents the Anglo concept when he declares:

The Anglo society values stemming from the Puritan view tend to emphasize work as a form of responsibility leading for the most part to rewards of a tangible nature...the responsible individual is the one who works first so that he can later enjoy his recreation with or among his material gains.⁶

Another cultural difference is the Anglo's tendency to judge other persons in terms of the material goods they have. Joseph Fitzpatrick says that the Anglo gives great importance to what the person has accomplished.⁷ Anglos consider Mexican immigrants and other groups dispossessed because they do not have material comforts.⁸ When the author moved to Arizona, he had to sell or

6 Murillo, 17.

7 Joseph Fitzpatrick, "Faith and Stability Among Hispanics," Families and Religions, eds. W. D'Antonio and J. Aldous (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1983), 234.

8 Murillo, 18.

leave everything in Puerto Rico. An Anglo pastor came to visit the author's family in Tucson and was shocked because he did not see pictures on the parsonage walls. Mexicans and other Hispanics have other values more important than money or objects, like family or personal relations.

Future and Present Time Orientation

Another difference that Murillo mentioned is the "tendency of the Anglo to live in a future time."⁹ Mexicans live more in the present. They enjoy more things and relationships in the present moment than future plans or projects. While the Anglo is making plans a year or more ahead, Mexicans are more concerned about the things they can enjoy in the present. Personal relations or family matters are more important for them than being on time for an appointment. At this point it is important to mention the concept of responsibility. While the Anglo considers it to be responsible to be punctual for an appointment, Mexicans give more importance to persons than to being present for an appointment at an agreed time.¹⁰ Hispanics have a phrase, la hora hispana (Hispanic time), to refer to the time at which the people come, which is usually half an hour later than the set time. They are not so concerned with being on time as the Anglos.

9. Murillo, 18.

10. Murillo, 18.

Concept of Courtesy

Another area of difference is the concept of "Courtesy or inter-personal relations."¹¹ Mexicans tend to express themselves in a complex and digressive manner. They use tactfulness and care when talking with other persons, because they do not want to hurt their feelings. Anglos have learned to be succinct and sincere, and they are used to teasing others. For them, it is not offensive. Mexicans and other Hispanic groups are not acquainted with teasing, and when an Anglo teases them, they feel offended and put down by the Anglo.¹² The reader can consult Amado Padilla for more information about these differences.¹³

Octavio Paz, one of Mexico's most prominent literary figures, says that "North Americans are realistic in a special sense since they want to know about some things but do not want to understand about them."¹⁴ He presents the example of death--an idea which Americans tend to avoid--while one of the traits of the Mexican is to contemplate horror. He also says that North Americans are "credulous and Mexicans are believers, they live fairy tales and detective stories while we love myths and

11 Murillo, 19.

12 Murillo, 19.

13 Amado Padilla, "Pluralistic Counseling and Psychotherapy for Hispanic Americans," Cross-Cultural Counseling and Psychotherapy, eds. Anthony J. Marsella and Paul B. Pedersen (New York: Pergamon, 1981), 199-200.

14 Lysander Kemp, trans., The Labyrinth of Solitude, by Octavio Paz (1961; reprint) (New York: Grove, 1985), 22.

legends....They are optimists and we are nihilists....We are suspicious and they are trusting."¹⁵ In other words, Americans and Mexicans have different cultural values, and a person who is working with Mexican immigrants should be familiar with these and other differences to give appropriate counseling and help to them.

15. Lysander Kemp, 23.

CHAPTER 4
Cultural Values of Mexicans

Importance of the Family

Mexican immigrants share the following values with other Hispanics. They consider family the most important "social group."¹ All the main events in their lives are related to the family. If they have a fiesta, all the family is invited. A person also considers himself first a member of his family, later a person or individual. When a member of the family is in need, perhaps of money or housing, he or she goes first to the family for help. Usually they will do all they can to solve the problem.

Sometimes several relatives end up living in the same house, resulting in overcrowded living conditions. Even the aged are taken care of by the family. In many instances an old widow goes to live with her daughter's family. Mexicans have very strong emotional attachments to their families.

Fitzpatrick points out that "young people are still expected to seek parental approval for purposes of courtship."² Usually it is the man who goes to the parents of the girlfriend to introduce himself, and to ask their approval for courtship with her. In the research done by the author, 75 percent of the youth

1 Fitzpatrick, 224.

2 Fitzpatrick, 224.

supported that value.³ One-hundred percent of the men, and 50 percent of the women also said it was very important for them.

One important concept related to the previous value is the nuclear and extended family. The nuclear family consists of the husband, wife and children. Mexicans sometimes include other close relatives such as the in-laws and the grandparents in their family. That is called an extended family. Joel Garreau affirms that the value of the extended family among Mexican-Americans still remains very strong.⁴

Sometimes the compadres of the children, uncles and cousins, come to live under the same roof. The Mexicans call compadres the children's padrinos or godparents. The child calls his godparent padrino while his parents call him compadre. (See Robert V. Kemper for added information about the compadre.)⁵ Children within the extended family are expected to respect the other relatives as they respect their parents. If the family is undocumented, sometimes relatives from Mexico cross the border to live with them. That creates a lot of tension in the family, but they feel it is part of their responsibility toward their family.

Supporting the Grandparents

In the question related to the value of supporting the

3 Appendix B, Table 7.

4 Garreau, 231.

5 Robert V. Kemper, Migration and Adaptation, Sage Library of Social Research, Vol. 43 (Beverly Hills: Sage Publ., 1977), 173-181.

grandparents, as was mentioned in Chapter 2, the majority of the immigrants said that this value is still very important for them. The same table showed that 100 percent of the women, 83 percent of the men and 50 percent of the youth also considered it very important that the family is the center of their life, and that they should help family members in crisis.⁶

Macho Concept

The macho concept, or male dominance, is another cultural value related to the family. Fitzpatrick says the following about that concept:

Machismo is a style of personal daring (the great quality of the bullfighter) by which one faces challenge, danger, and threat with calm and self-possession....It is also a quality of personal magnetism that impresses and influences others.⁷

Male dominance is noted also in the authority the man has in the household. He has authority over his wife, who usually is passive or submissive, and over his children. Most Mexican married women are not assertive. In that culture, men are dominant over women and make the final decisions. The man is the head of the household, and his decisions are respected by his family. Maximiliano Contreras, current director of the bilingual, cross-cultural graduate program at California State University, Dominguez Hills, says, "In reality, the woman is a

6. Appendix B, Table 7.

7. Fitzpatrick, 227.

strong partner...she is head of the domestic household."⁸ If the man is not at home, the woman has authority over her children. It was interesting that only 17 percent of the men considered it very important that they are the head of household and their decisions should be respected, while 40 percent of the women who answered that question said it was very important.⁹

Child Discipline

Related to the male dominance is child discipline. Since the father is dominant in his home, he is the one who disciplines his children. That discipline is strict and physical. Mexican men believe that they should discipline physically in order to obtain respect and help the children grow as responsible persons. In the research done by the author, physical discipline by the father was strongly supported.¹⁰ The men agreed by 67 percent, women by 60 percent and youth by 25 percent. Rev. Flores observed, "Persons who punish children physically when small do not need to punish them later. We must be firm and correct them when they are small."¹¹

The following cultural values are part of the Hispanic culture and are shared by the Mexican immigrants: personalism,

8 Maximiliano Contreras, Crossing: A Comparative Analysis of the Mexicano, Mexican-American and Chicano (San Pedro, CA: Travel Study, 1983), 27.

9 Appendix B, Table 7.

10 Appendix B, Table 7.

11 Flores.

padrino, machismo, family obligation, primacy of the spiritual, fatalism, and a sense of hierarchy.¹²

Personalism

One of the most characteristic values of Mexican immigrants is personalism. The Anglo culture stresses the individual's value by his achievements and efficiency at work. In the Hispanic culture each person has his own value independent of education, economic status, and efficiency. Each person has value because of his inner spiritual qualities.¹³ There are persons who are born into a higher economic position and consider themselves better than the poor; but the majority of the Hispanics value others in terms of inner qualities. For instance, in the author's hometown there was an ice cream man who was very appreciated by the community children and parents. That man's value depended not on his money or education, but on the personal inner qualities and relationships with the families there. Mexicans and other Hispanics value each person for his "inner dignity."¹⁴

In the author's research related with the cultural values, 67 percent of the men, 80 percent of the women, and 25 percent of the youth considered the value of personalism very important. This is a recognition of value based on spiritual qualities.

12 Fitzpatrick, 225-228.

13 Fitzpatrick, 225-226.

14 Fitzpatrick, 226.

Mexicans and Hispanics can appreciate and value a shoemaker, as well as a teacher. For youth, this value is not very important, and it seems that they are adapting to the Anglo culture and values.

Padrino

Another value is the padrino. He is a person in a position of authority or power to whom persons can go for help or support in any difficult situation.¹⁵ The padrino has access to money and influence to help the person in need. Fitzpatrick affirms that this value has decreased in importance.¹⁶ In Appendix B, Table 7, the biggest positive response came from the youth, with 50 percent affirming that "a padrino can help us." Forty percent of the women and 33 percent of the men responded affirmatively to the same question.¹⁷ If the problem was lack of money, getting a padrino was considered very important by 50 percent of the men and 50 percent of the women.¹⁸

Therefore, it seems that these persons have been adapting to this culture and understand that here it is different than Mexico, and they need to change in order to improve their situation. They have to find other resources for helping them.

15 Fitzpatrick, 227.

16 Fitzpatrick, 227.

17 Appendix B, Table 7.

18 Appendix B, Table 7.

Primacy of the Spiritual

Mexican immigrants have a strong sense of the primacy of spiritual qualities. Their main concerns are for the transcendental qualities of justice, love and loyalty. They are not very concerned with the material features of this world, like the Anglos. For them, life is important because of the ultimate values and spiritual goals. When the author asked a question about spiritual qualities, 90 percent of the women, 83 percent of the men, and 50 percent of the youth said they were very important values for them.¹⁹ In conclusion, Mexican immigrants have a very strong sense for the spiritual things like other persons from their culture.

Fatalism

Fatalism is another value that represents this culture. It means that people have a sense of destiny based on the feeling that divine providence is governing the world, and all things happen because it was meant to be.²⁰ Mexicans believe that God has control over the things in the universe. Contreras also mentions this value as characteristic of the Mexicans.²¹ Because of this quality they tend to accept many situations in life as unavoidable. When the author asked them about the value of fatalism, 50 percent of the men and 40 percent of the women

19 Appendix B, Table 7.

20 Fitzpatrick, 228.

21 Contreras, 31.

supported it. Twenty-five percent of the youth also said that this belief was important for them. In short, there is a sense of fatalism in the immigrants, although it is not as significant as other values.

Sense of Hierarchy

They also have a concept of a hierarchical world. Mexicans believe that there is a relationship of higher and lower classes that is fixed and cannot be changed. In Appendix B, Table 7, 40 percent of the women, 33 percent of the men and 25 percent of the youth affirmed that hierarchy was very important for them. This is not a big response from the respondents, and shows that they do not consider this value as important as, for example, familism or personalism.

Parental Approval for Marriage

In Appendix B, Table 7, 100 percent of the men, and only 50 percent of the women think that a couple should seek parental approval for courtship and marriage. Seventy-five percent of the youth also think that it is very important. Men, because they consider themselves head of the household, still believe that the couple should seek parental approval.

Man as Head of Household

It is interesting that in Appendix B, Table 6, 83 percent of the men said that it was very important for them that the man should be the head of the household. However, in Appendix B, Table 7, when the author added "his decisions should be

respected," the men's response was not as high as in Appendix B, Table 6. While the majority of the men supported the view that the men should be the head of the household, 83 percent did not consider it important that the woman should be subject to the husband. Also, 80 percent of the women affirmed that it was not important. Maybe the word "subject" was so strong that it accounts for the difference. This is a change from the traditional family concept in Mexico. It appears that the men are giving women more opportunity in the decision-making process because of the acculturation process. Women also have more interest in taking part in the decision-making process because they are working outside the home and contributing to the family's income.

Therefore, Mexican immigrants have kept most of their cultural values, although some of them are not as important as when they were in Mexico; for example: padrino, sense of hierarchy, and husband as head of household. The last was not considered as important by men mainly because of the difficult financial situation they live in here in the United States and the need for the woman to find work outside the home to supplement the man's salary. Men who are raised in a culture in which men are told that they should be the breadwinners feel that they have not been good enough to support their families, and their self-esteem is low. Some of them accept the fact that the woman has to work to help pay the bills, but they may also feel

incompetent.

CHAPTER 5

Pastoral Counseling for Mexican-Immigrant Families

Different Counseling Techniques
Applied to Mexicans

A pastoral counseling program for Mexican-immigrant families should take into consideration the cultural differences between the Mexican immigrants and the Anglos. Mexicans live in the city--the majority of them in apartments. They are undereducated, poor and have low salaries. These factors create a lot of stress upon them and require a different counseling approach in order to be effective. Howard Clinebell Jr., professor emeritus at the School of Theology at Claremont, and the author of many books about counseling, confirms this when he says:

Ministers who serve inner city or blue collar congregations soon discover that goals and methods of pastoral counseling, as traditionally conceived, are relatively ineffective with many persons from non-middle-class backgrounds.¹

Also, Charles F. Kemp, professor emeritus of pastoral counseling and psychology of religion at Brite Divinity School, said that those who work with poor persons should use different types of counseling techniques than those used with the middle class.²

1 Howard Clinebell, Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling, Revised ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), 97.

2 Charles F. Kemp, Pastoral Care with the Poor (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978), 48.

Advice and Help

Because most of the Mexicans who come to the United States have never been to a professional counselor or therapist, they are not prepared to sit down and discuss their emotional problems and feelings. Their main concerns are immediate needs such as: a job, food for the family, getting citizenship, health insurance, and others. When they come to the minister, they expect him or her to give them immediate help with their needs.³ That is one experience the author has during office hours. Kemp says that the Hispanics view help as something practical that someone can do for them.⁴ The author has received low-income Latins, blacks and whites in his office, all similar, because they bring their main practical problems and needs. Some of them were helped, others were referred to other institutions that give assistance. In one case, the author took the person to an institution, after confirming the availability of the service. When a person needs help, the pastor or volunteers should do the best they can to help or refer that person to another institution that can give the specialized help the person needs.

Kemp says that the person who is helping the poor should be prepared to change the counseling techniques he has been using, and give more advice and ideas to solve the problem because persons "expect immediate results."⁵ Sometimes the person cannot

3 Clinebell, 97.

4 Charles Kemp, 67.

5 Charles Kemp, 69.

be helped in practical terms, and the minister should be with that person, giving him or her spiritual support. The counselor shall be like crutches are for the invalid--a support, a source of strength in the time of need. That is one of the main functions of the pastor, especially of the pastoral counselor.

Some time ago, the author was asked by a pastor from another conference to recommend help for a person who was trying to find his wife and children. A letter came from that person explaining the problem, and it was answered by the author. In a short time, that person came to California. The author met with the man, gave him spiritual assistance and explored the problem and his feelings. After several telephone conversations with the man, as well as attempts to find his wife, the only thing the author could do was to stay with the husband and give him spiritual support. After the man left California, the author referred him to a pastor close to where he lives. Later, the man wrote a letter to the author updating his situation. He also personally tried to find his wife, and he could not do it. Once a person knows that the counselor is helping or trying to help with the problem, then a trust atmosphere is developed between the client and the pastor, and the person is more open for pastoral counseling. Because of that trust, the person will be motivated for counseling.

One program that the author has implemented at Atlantic United Methodist Church is El Buen Samaritano. The Center consists of several lay volunteers, with the minister as the

director, and its main purpose is to offer counseling and help to the poor Hispanic persons in Long Beach. This program began in January, 1988 and the volunteers are actively organizing the office and the food and clothing banks. The Center asked the city Food Bank for help with food assistance, and also provides clothing and referral for other needs. The church also has raised money to buy food and has given donations of canned food to help the needy. Lay volunteers interview the persons and give referrals and basic counseling. The Center also will help undocumented persons with the process of applying for citizenship. In those cases in which the person needs to see the pastor for counseling, he will be referred by the volunteers.

The local church is located in an area of high crime, gangs and low-income Hispanics and blacks. The opportunity of ministering to the poor is tremendous, and El Buen Samaritano is a way of helping immigrants and others with their needs.

Volunteers

One suggestion about counseling Mexican immigrants is to use volunteers from the same cultural group. If the volunteers are from the same culture group, they can identify with the needs of the clients and will work with more empathy and enthusiasm to help them. Also, the persons in need will feel more comfortable speaking in their own language, and will be more open about their needs. The volunteers must receive training to enable them to help. The training should include how to fill out information forms and how to prepare the food bags. The pastor should also

teach them some basic principles of counseling and referral.

Armando Padilla, Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Los Angeles, suggests several counseling therapies that are effective with Hispanics. These are: pluralistic counseling, group counseling, family therapy, and assertiveness training.⁶ These can be used after the client develops trust in the counselor or pastor.

Pluralistic Counseling

Pluralistic counseling "recognizes the client's cultural beliefs, values and behavior."⁷ This therapy takes into consideration needs of the persons as well as the cultural values. When using pluralistic counseling, it is important to set therapy goals with the person. The person should know the life-style options and consequences he has in each option. Padilla also said that the counselor should have "three qualities of good healers: exhibit personableness, skills labeling emotional problems and ability to raise the client's expectations for change."⁸

Group Counseling

Another effective therapy is group counseling. This therapy has helped Hispanics with emotional problems, especially those who have problems adjusting to this culture and conflicts. The author of this paper may ask them to explain their behavioral

6 Padilla, 201-210.

7 Padilla, 201.

8 Padilla, 204-206.

goals, mention the conflicts and problems with which they are dealing and propose some possible solutions. This will be like a growth group and can easily meet in someone's home. In the group, the author and the persons can explore the different choices and help them choose the best one. Some relaxation techniques can also be useful in group therapy.

Family Counseling

Since Hispanics have a deep sense of the importance of the family, family therapy can be very important in counseling the Mexican immigrants. The author believes that the problems that confront one member of the Mexican family are not isolated, but are related and influence other members of the family. The author of this project will develop a series of counseling sessions with families to help them with parenting problems such as: their children's academic performance, conflicts at school, physical punishment of children, sex education and gangs. There will also be sessions on cultural conflicts. Since Mexican families are relatively young and have small children, a counseling program directed by the author in his church would help them deal with parenting and cultural conflicts. Since the author comes from the Hispanic culture, he shares and understands their values and conflicts.

Assertiveness Training

Padilla mentions that "Boulette has observed many Hispanic females respond to stress by crying, praying and enduring."⁹ For

⁹ Padilla, 211.

example, a family member who has conflict with the English language may come to the counselor for help. The counselor can educate the person about the relationship of his nonassertive behavior to the symptoms he has,¹⁰ and offer some resources to solve the problem, like registering in an English language class. Applying this principle to the Mexican immigrant, a woman who is not very assertive may practice what she is going to say to the tutor or English teacher with the minister or counselor.

Trying to change the nonassertive behavior of a wife can be a problem for Mexican families because of the macho concept of the husband. It is very important that the counselor or minister take that into consideration when he works with assertiveness training. The author believes that a counselor can talk with a woman and see how strong the macho concept is in her husband and how assertiveness training will affect the marriage. One important aspect of assertiveness counseling with Mexicans is to help the woman develop assertive behavior and help the husband change some of the values he has that oppress his wife and do not let her develop as a full human being. This is part of the role of the pastoral counselor. These changes will help the woman and the man adjust to this culture. The counselor has to help the couple understand that the macho concept is a way of preventing the wife from developing as an individual with equal rights and opportunities.

A person who has a strong value of fatalism would not be

10 Padilla, 211.

able to improve his living conditions or financial situation.

The counselor has to be able to raise a realistic hope for that person and help the person to change that attitude.

The author believes that the metaphor, "choice and change," that David Augsburger presents in his book is very useful in working with immigrants with destructive or negative values.¹¹ By giving a choice to the immigrant, such as to learn new ways to treat his wife as a full human being, the person can change his behavior.

Another useful metaphor is the "wounded healer."¹² Some of the immigrants feel powerless confronting the problems of language, dual culture, crime and others. The counselor needs to be aware of his own wounds to identify with the pains and losses of others.

Implications for Counseling of Some Values

Mexican immigrants have some values that are negative for them and have implications for counseling. The macho concept creates an unjust situation between husband and wife. This value is related to the man as head of the household. Since married Mexican women are not assertive and men have authority over them and the children, counseling should develop assertiveness behavior in the wife, and enable the man to change his negative and unjust behavior. Through these changes, the counselor will

11 David W. Augsburger, Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 349-350.

12 Augsburger, 368-372.

help the couple to develop and grow.

Another negative value is fatalism. The author mentioned earlier that this value prevents Mexicans from improving their financial situation, because they believe that all things that happen to them are related to a destiny and cannot be changed. The counselor should develop a realistic hope in these persons. Using pluralistic counseling, the counselor can raise the client's expectations and change his views about the future and hope. Counseling also should clarify the emotional problems related to fatalism and the consequences of not changing the behavior and beliefs about destiny.

The value of a sense of hierarchy also prevents the immigrants from improving their lives and adjusting to this culture. Since they believe that there is a hierarchy of higher and lower classes that cannot be changed, this does not help them succeed financially and grow as full persons. The counselor can help the person examine his beliefs about this value and enable that person to grow and change through education.

Child discipline is another value that in some families creates problems. The majority of Mexicans believe that children need to be disciplined, but the problem occurs when the father punishes the children excessively. The author knows a woman who hit her teenage nephew in his face in front of other persons. That is abusive, and not a way of helping the youth to grow fully as a responsible human being. The counselor can educate the person to be fairer in the discipline of the children, and change

the negative values that he has received from his culture.

Family counseling can be useful in helping those persons to grow.

Extended family households are not negative for some immigrants, but for others it creates a financial burden. In some families, because of the limited space and income, counseling is very important to help them understand the problem and make a change that helps the family and enables them to grow. Family therapy will help them see the negative aspects of the value and make the necessary changes in their family.

The other values are not negative for Hispanics, although Anglos do not agree with them. The counselor can talk with the person to see if there is any problem with the value system and enable the person to grow.

Working with a person from another culture is not easy, but if the counselor is also Hispanic that helps the client and the counselor because both understand the problems and have the same cultural values. It is more difficult for an Anglo to counsel Mexicans or Hispanics because he has to understand the cultural aspects and values of those persons. Because the author is Hispanic, counseling Mexicans or Hispanics will not be so difficult because he will not be crossing cultures.

In conclusion, a pastoral counseling program for Mexican-immigrant families has to consider all the values, conflicts and needs of the persons in order to help them deal with the dual-culture conflicts and adjustments to this culture. The first approach is to give the persons the help they need or refer them

to other institutions. When a person develops trust in a counselor, other therapies can be used to help that person solve inner conflicts.

Appendix A

Introductory Letter

November 13, 1986

Dear Friends,

I am conducting research about the Mexican-immigrant family. This is part of a course I am taking this fall at the School of Theology at Claremont.

I would like to have your cooperation by filling these questionnaires that are dealing with the values and problems that the Mexican-immigrant families deal with here in the United States. Your support will be valuable to me when I prepare my professional project for my Doctor of Ministry Project: "A Pastoral Program for Mexican-Immigrant Families."

Sincerely yours,

Brindice Munoz-Rivera

Questionnaire

Table 1

These are some of the conflicts that the Mexican-immigrant families have in the United States. Tell how important they are for you. (Check each appropriate space.)

	Very Important	Important	Not Important
1. Problems understanding and speaking English			
2. I speak and write Spanish			
3. Low income			
4. Your parents and relatives live with you			
5. Change in roles of husband and wife			
6. Lack of employment			
7. Lack of health insurance			
8. Lack of political representation			
9. Young people and drugs			
10. Young people and gangs			
11. High crime			
12. High cost credit			
13. Ethnic and prejudice			

1 : Please fill the following information to classify the questionnaire:

a) Age _____ Sex _____ Occupation _____

b) Role in your family: Father _____ Mother _____
Child _____ Other _____

c) How many years have you been in the U.S.? _____

d) Are you doing well financially? Yes __ No __ Ok __

Table 2

Which of the following alternatives do you think are the best to solve the conflict of dual languages. Rank them from 1 to 5.

1. Speak both languages well. _____
2. Speak and write only English and adapt to the Anglo culture. _____
3. Speak Spanish at home and English outside. _____
4. Speak only English but keep our cultural values. _____
5. Speak only Spanish and remain an ethnic community. _____

Table 3

The lack of money creates a lot of conflict and stress upon the Mexican family. Tell how important these alternatives are to solve that problem.

	Very Important	Not Important
1. The husband should work in a better job		
2. Both wife and husband should work outside		
3. Husband should get a better education to earn more money		
4. We should get citizenship		
5. See in which way the minister and the church help in the economic problem		
6. We should get information from a job agency		
7. We should get a "padrino" to help us get a good job		
8. Other _____		

Table 4

The role of the man and the woman has been changing in this society. Indicate which alternatives are better for your family. Check each appropriate answer.

	Very Important	Not Important
1. Men should be the head of the household		
2. Women should be subject to husband		
3. Wife should work outside		
4. Men should be the bread-winner		
5. Men can have extra-marital sex		
6. Daughter should remain virgin until marriage		
7. Son can have sexual relationships before marriage		
8. Wife can have extra-marital sex		
9. We should adapt to the cultural values of this country		
10. Boys shall clean dishes, make dinner, and help at home		
11. A couple may decide to live together before marriage		

Table 5

Tell how important these values are for your family. Check the appropriate boxes.

	Very Important	Important	Not Important
1. Each person have their own value independent of his/her money or status			
2. The family is the center of our life. We should help family members on crisis			
3. The spiritual things are important like justice, love, and loyalty			
4. A young couple should seek parental approval for courtship and marriage			
5. We should maintain and support our grandparents and if necessary keep them at home			
6. The husband is the head of the household and his decisions should be respected			
7. The father should discipline the children, and if necessary punish them physically			
8. If we have financial problems a "padrino" can help us			
9. We have a destiny, and all things that happen to us are related to that destiny and is inevitable (fatalism)			
10. There are some higher classes and lower classes that are fixed like parts of the body (sense of hierarchy)			

Appendix B
Survey Tabulations

Table 1

**Some Conflicts Mexican Immigrants Have in USA,
in Order of Priority**

<u>Conflicts</u>	<u>Persons Responding</u>	<u>% Youth</u>	<u>% Men</u>	<u>% Women</u>	Very Important
Young people and drugs	17	75	67	100	
Lack of health insurance	17	50	100	90	
Lack of employment	16	50	83	90	
Young people and gangs	16	50	67	100	
High crime	16	50	83	90	
Ethnicity and prejudice	15	50	83	80	
Problems understanding and communicating in English	14	25	67	90	
I speak and write Spanish	13	0	85	80	
Low income	13	50	67	70	
High-cost credit	13	25	83	70	
Lack of political representation	11	50	67	50	
Changes in role of husband and wife	8	25	33	50	
Your parents or relatives live with you	7	25	50	30	

Source: Research done by author with Mexican-immigrant families in 1986.

Table 2

Classification of Some Conflicts Experienced by Mexican-
Immigrant Families, in Percentages, in Order of Importance

Conflicts	*Total % Answers	Very Important			Important			Not Important		
					Y	M	W	Y	M	W
		Y	M	W	Y	M	W	Y	M	W
Problems understanding and communicating in English	90	25	67	90	50	17	10	0	0	0
I speak and write Spanish	90	0	83	80	25	17	20	0	17	0
Low income	80	50	67	70	0	17	20	0	0	0
Your parents or relatives live with you	80	25	50	30	25	0	10	0	50	40
Change in roles of husband and wife	80	25	33	50	25	0	30	0	50	10
Lack of employment	80	50	83	90	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lack of health insurance	90	50	100	90	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lack of political representation	90	50	67	50	0	17	40	0	17	10
Young people and drugs	90	75	67	100	0	17	0	0	0	0
Young people and gangs	85	50	67	100	0	17	0	0	0	0
High crime	90	50	83	90	0	17	0	0	0	0
High-cost credit	85	25	83	70	25	0	30	0	0	0
Ethnicity and prejudice	90	50	83	80	0	17	20	0	0	0

Note: *This column represents the percentage of people who answered each question.

Table 3

Classification of Some Conflicts Experienced by Mexican-
Immigrant Families, in Absolute Numbers, in Order of Importance

Conflicts	Total	Very Important			Important			Not Important		
		Y	M	W	Y	M	W	Y	M	W
Problems understanding and communicating in English	18	4	9	1	1	1	2	0	0	0
I speak and write Spanish	18	5	8	0	1	2	1	1	0	0
Low income	16	4	7	2	1	2	0	0	0	0
Your parents or relatives live with you	16	3	3	1	0	1	1	3	4	0
Change in roles of husband and wife	16	2	5	1	0	3	1	3	1	0
Lack of employment	16	5	9	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lack of health insurance	18	6	9	2	0	1	0	0	0	0
Lack of political representation	18	4	5	2	1	4	0	1	1	0
Young people and drugs	18	4	10	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
Young people and gangs	17	4	10	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
High crime	18	5	9	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
High-cost credit	17	5	7	1	0	3	1	0	0	0
Ethnicity and prejudice	18	5	8	2	1	2	0	0	0	0

Source: Research done by author with Mexican-immigrant families in 1986.

Table 4

**Alternatives to Solving the Conflict of Dual Language,
in Order of Priorities**

	<u>Persons</u>	<u>Place</u>
Speak both languages well.	5	1
Speak Spanish at home and English outside.	5	2
Speak only English, but keep our cultural values.	4	3
Speak and write only English and adapt to the Anglo culture.	3	4
Speak only Spanish and remain an ethnic community.	3	5

**Source: Research done by author with Mexican-immigrant
families in 1986.**

Table 5

Alternatives to Solving the Problem of Lack of Money

	Very Important		
	% Youth	% Men	% Women
The husband should work in a better paying job.	25	67	80
Both wife and husband should work outside.	25	17	20
Husband should get a better education to earn more money.	25	50	80
We should get citizenship.	25	50	60
See in which way the minister and the church help with the economic problem.	25	50	50
We should get information from a job agency.	25	33	50
We should get a <u>padrino</u> to help us get a good job.	0	50	50

Source: Research done by author with Mexican-immigrant families in 1986.

Table 6

Male and Female Role Changes. Best Alternatives
for the Mexican-Immigrant Family, in Percentages

Roles	Total % Answers	Very Important			Important			Not Important		
		Y	M	W	Y	M	W	Y	M	W
Man should be the head of the household.	80	25	83	50	0	17	10	25	0	20
Woman should be subject to husband.	80	0	0	10	25	0	0	25	83	80
Wife should work outside.	80	0	0	30	50	17	20	0	67	40
Man should be the breadwinner.	80	0	67	50	50	17	0	0	0	40
Man can have extramarital sex.	80	25	0	20	0	0	0	25	83	70
Daughter should remain a virgin until marriage.	85	75	67	70	0	17	0	0	0	20
Son can have sexual relations before marriage.	80	25	0	10	0	33	0	0	67	80
Wife can have extramarital sex.	70	50	0	10	0	0	0	0	50	80
We should adapt to this country's values.	65	50	50	20	0	33	10	0	0	30
Boys shall clean dishes, make the dinner and help at home.	60	50	17	60	0	17	0	0	33	30
A couple may decide to live together before marriage.	60	25	0	20	0	17	20	25	50	50

Table 7

Importance of Values for Mexican Family

	Very Important		
	% Youth	% Men	% Women
Each person have their own value independent of his/her money or status.	25	67	80
The family is the center of our life. We should help family members on crisis.	50	83	100
The spiritual things are important like justice, love, and loyalty.	50	83	90
A young couple should seek parental approval for courtship and marriage.	75	100	50
We should maintain and support our grandparents and if necessary keep them at home.	50	50	90
The husband is the head of the household and his decisions should be respected.	17	40	
The father should discipline the children, and if necessary punish them physically.	25	67	60
If we have financial problems a <u>padrino</u> can help us.	50	33	40
We have a destiny, and all things that happen to us are related to that destiny, and is inevitable. (fatalism)	25	50	40
There are some higher classes and lower classes that are fixed like parts of the body. (sense of hierarchy)	25	33	40

Source: Research done by author with Mexican-immigrant families in 1986.

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